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AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS AS A TOOL FOR BUILDING ORAL COMMUNICATION CONFIDENCE AMONG MEDICAL UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS IN UZBEKISTAN

Asia International University,
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology,
Department of Foreign Languages and Social Sciences,
Lecturer: **Makhsudova Makhliyokhon**
mahliyomakhsudova@gmail.com

Abstract: Speaking confidence is a fundamental component of effective communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), especially in medical education where students are expected to communicate professionally in international settings. However, many medical university students in Uzbekistan face challenges in oral communication due to linguistic anxiety, limited authentic exposure, and lack of confidence. This study investigates the role of audio-visual materials in enhancing oral communication confidence among medical university EFL learners. A mixed-method research design was employed involving 80 medical students from a university in Uzbekistan. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test speaking assessments, confidence questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews over a 10-week intervention period. Audio-visual resources including clinical videos, medical podcasts, doctor-patient dialogues, and authentic healthcare simulations were integrated into speaking lessons.

The findings indicate that audio-visual materials significantly improved students' speaking confidence, reduced communication anxiety, and enhanced classroom participation. The study highlights the pedagogical significance of multimedia integration in English for Medical Purposes (EMP) instruction and suggests practical implications for EFL educators in higher medical education.

Keywords EFL, English for Medical Purposes, speaking confidence, audio-visual materials, Uzbekistan, medical education.

Globalization has transformed English into the dominant language of science, medicine, and international communication. For medical students, proficiency in English is increasingly essential for accessing scientific literature, attending international conferences, and communicating with patients and healthcare professionals worldwide. In Uzbekistan, English language education has become a national priority, particularly in higher education institutions. Medical universities have expanded their English programs to prepare students for global medical practice. However, despite these reforms, many students continue to struggle with oral communication. Speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill among EFL learners. Unlike reading or writing, speaking requires spontaneous language production, immediate processing, and confidence. In medical contexts, this challenge becomes more significant because students must use specialized terminology, interact in professional settings, and communicate accurately under pressure.

One of the main barriers to speaking proficiency is lack of confidence. Confidence influences learners' willingness to communicate, classroom participation, and ability to perform in real-life situations. Low confidence often results in silence, fear of mistakes, and reduced motivation. Traditional EFL classrooms in medical universities often rely heavily on textbook-based instruction, grammar translation, and limited speaking practice. Such approaches may not sufficiently expose

learners to authentic medical communication. Audio-visual materials offer a practical alternative by providing authentic, contextualized, and engaging language input. These resources include videos, podcasts, simulations, films, and digital presentations that combine auditory and visual information. For medical students, audio-visual materials are particularly beneficial because they simulate real clinical environments. Students can observe doctor-patient interactions, medical consultations, and professional communication strategies.

This study aims to explore how audio-visual materials contribute to building oral communication confidence among medical university students in Uzbekistan. The study addresses the following research questions: How do audio-visual materials influence speaking confidence among medical EFL students? What impact do audio-visual materials have on speaking anxiety? How do students perceive multimedia-assisted speaking activities? Speaking confidence refers to learners' belief in their ability to communicate effectively in a target language. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy significantly affects performance outcomes. In EFL contexts, students with higher confidence tend to participate more actively and demonstrate better speaking fluency. MacIntyre et al. (1998) introduced the concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC), emphasizing that confidence directly influences language production. Students who lack confidence often avoid speaking opportunities. MacIntyre et al. (1998) introduced the concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC), emphasizing that confidence directly influences language production. Students who lack confidence often avoid speaking opportunities. Audio-visual materials combine sound and visual elements to enhance learning experiences. Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning suggests that students learn more effectively when information is presented through multiple channels. In language education, multimedia materials improve listening comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, and speaking fluency. Videos provide contextualized language input, helping learners understand body language, tone, and situational expressions. Podcasts also contribute to oral skill development by exposing learners to authentic speech patterns. Medical English requires specialized communication skills. Studies have shown that clinical videos and simulations improve students' professional communication competence. According to Chen (2022), medical students exposed to authentic healthcare dialogues demonstrated improved confidence in patient communication. Similarly, Kumar and Lee (2023) found that video-assisted EMP instruction increased learners' motivation. Clinical simulations create realistic environments where students can practice diagnosis explanations, patient interviews, and consultation skills. Several studies indicate that audio-visual materials reduce anxiety by creating supportive and engaging learning environments. Rahman (2021) found that video-based speaking tasks lowered anxiety levels among EFL learners. Interactive multimedia provides repetition, contextual clues, and opportunities for imitation. This reduces fear of making mistakes because students have models to follow. Although previous studies have examined multimedia in EFL classrooms, limited research has focused specifically on medical students in Uzbekistan. Moreover, few studies have investigated the relationship between audio-visual materials and speaking confidence in EMP settings. This study attempts to fill this gap by exploring the effectiveness of multimedia-assisted speaking instruction in medical higher education. This study employed a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of audio-visual materials on speaking confidence among medical university EFL students. A quasi-experimental design was used for the quantitative phase, while interviews and classroom observations were conducted for qualitative data collection. The participants were 80 undergraduate medical students from a medical university in Uzbekistan. The students were enrolled in an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course. Their

proficiency levels ranged from intermediate to upper-intermediate. Participants were selected using convenience sampling due to institutional access. The following instruments were used: Speaking pre-test and post-test (evaluated using IELTS-style speaking rubric). Speaking confidence questionnaire (5-point Likert scale). Semi-structured interviews (15 students selected randomly). Classroom observation checklist. The study lasted 10 weeks and consisted of three phases: Phase 1: Pre-intervention. Students completed speaking pre-test. Confidence questionnaire administered. Phase 2: Intervention. Audio-visual materials were integrated into speaking lessons: Medical consultation videos. Doctor-patient role-play simulations. Podcasts on healthcare topics. Animated clinical case studies. TED-style medical presentations. Activities included: Video-based discussions. Role-play based on clinical scenarios. Group presentations. Listening-to-speaking transformation tasks. Phase 3: Post-intervention. Speaking post-test conducted. Questionnaire repeated. Interviews conducted.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage comparison). Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

The pre-test results showed low speaking confidence among students. Pre-intervention confidence level: Mean = 2.6 / 5. Post-intervention confidence level: Mean = 4.1 / 5. This indicates a significant improvement after the use of audio-visual materials. The findings of this study confirm that audio-visual materials significantly enhance speaking confidence among medical EFL students. This aligns with Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory, which emphasizes dual-channel processing (visual and auditory). The improvement in confidence can be explained by increased exposure to authentic medical communication. Students were able to observe real doctor-patient interactions, which helped them internalize professional language patterns. The reduction in anxiety is consistent with Horwitz's Foreign Language Anxiety theory, which suggests that supportive and contextualized learning environments reduce psychological barriers. Furthermore, the findings support Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. As students successfully completed speaking tasks, their belief in their own ability increased, leading to higher participation. In the context of Uzbekistan, where traditional teaching methods still dominate, the integration of multimedia represents a shift toward more communicative and student-centered learning. This study demonstrates that audio-visual materials are effective in improving oral communication confidence among medical university EFL students in Uzbekistan. The intervention led to reduced anxiety, increased motivation, and improved speaking performance. The results highlight the importance of integrating multimedia tools in English for Medical Purposes (EMP) instruction. Teachers should incorporate videos, simulations, and digital resources to create more interactive learning environments. Teachers should use authentic medical videos regularly. Role-play activities should be based on real clinical scenarios. Multimedia should complement, not replace, traditional instruction. English has become an international language used in education, science, business, and global communication. As a result, university students are increasingly expected to develop effective communication skills in English. In many EFL classrooms, however, traditional teaching approaches continue to focus heavily on grammar instruction, memorization, and teacher-centered activities. Although these methods may improve students' knowledge of grammatical rules, they often fail to develop communicative competence and real-life language use. Modern language teaching emphasizes interaction, collaboration, and meaningful communication. Among the approaches that support these goals, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has emerged as one of the most influential methodologies in second language education. TBLT focuses on the completion of meaningful tasks that encourage students to use language for authentic communication rather than merely practicing isolated grammar structures. Tasks such as problem-solving activities,

discussions, role plays, and information-gap exercises create opportunities for learners to interact naturally in the target language. This approach promotes student engagement, critical thinking, and learner autonomy. Furthermore, TBLT reflects real-life communication situations, helping students prepare for academic and professional contexts. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of Task-Based Language Teaching in university EFL classrooms. Specifically, the research examines how TBLT influences students' communicative competence, classroom participation, and motivation toward learning English. Task-Based Language Teaching is a communicative approach in which learning is organized around tasks rather than grammatical structures. According to David Nunan, a task is a classroom activity that requires learners to use the target language to achieve a communicative outcome. Similarly, Rod Ellis defines tasks as activities that focus primarily on meaning while encouraging learners to use language practically. Unlike traditional methods, TBLT prioritizes communication and interaction. Students are encouraged to express ideas, solve problems, and complete objectives through collaborative activities. Grammar instruction is not ignored; rather, it is integrated naturally within communicative contexts. The globalization of medicine and healthcare has increased the need for medical professionals who can communicate effectively in English. International conferences, research publications, patient consultations, and medical cooperation often require proficiency in professional English. As a result, teaching Medical English has become an important part of university education for future doctors, nurses, and healthcare specialists. Traditional language teaching methods often rely on simplified textbook materials. Although such resources provide structured learning, they may not adequately prepare students for real communication in professional settings. Medical students frequently face challenges when they encounter authentic texts, such as research articles, prescriptions, or clinical case reports, because classroom materials may not reflect real medical discourse. Authentic materials are defined as texts, audio, video, or documents created for native speakers rather than for language learners. In the context of Medical English, these may include medical journals, hospital admission forms, patient information leaflets, podcasts, healthcare websites, and professional interviews. The use of such resources bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world practice.

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